19 May 1972

Dear Harold:

Your third class mailing of the 6th (postmarked Washington) came in yesterday, containing the copy of Ray's letter and many interesting clippings. Those you requested be returned are enclosed along with some minor contributions from this end.

On the 12th we finished up six weeks of the graveyard shift, the effects of which were cumulative and hit us along with the shock of returning to a less abnormal schedule. We've been pretty much hors de combat for a week, trying to learn how to sleep again and hoping our digestive systems would settle down.

Since we last wrote (just after JEH died) Nixon has mined North Vietnamese ports and then the other day the attempt was made on George Wallace. If one follows the ancient Chinese principle that nothing that happens in an election year is unrelated to the campaign, certain tentative conclusions emerge. The first is that nothing to date contradicts the assumption that the war is being prolonged mainly for campaign purposes. What we read in the news concerns military operations, most of them disastrous; nothing is said of the political changes going on in the countryside in Vietnam, where Thieu's people are being liquidated or chased into Saigon. Nixon may get minor comfort from the Russians on his Moscow trip, but they, no more than the Chinese, can afford to jeopardize their position in the world by selling out the NLF and the North Vietnamese. If, as is beginning to be said openly in the establishment press, Nixon's policy of Vietnamization has failed utterly, I would like to repeat, however immodestly, what I said last time: that the object of the policy was not to Vietnamize the war but to Vietnamize the defeat. If Thieu can't make it with American logistic and air support, well, after a few more months, say after the GOP convention, perhaps his defeat might be accepted in this country, where an American defeat wouldn't be accepted.

The other thing that has interested us is that the case of George Wallace fills a long-felt need in the pattern of assassinations in this country. As long as only liberals and antiwar characters were being knocked off the whole policy was admittedly, even glaringly, one-sided. Now no one can say that our bumper crop of lone nuts are not well-rounded and perfectly capable of operating on both sides of the political spectrum. Mr. Bremer thus contributes a sense of balance to the picture, compared with which the probability that, with Wallace campaigning at best from a wheelchair, Nixon will pick up votes in the south is indeed a patty consideration. Mr. Bremer contributes more than balance, actually. There is a certain finesse about his catholicity -- not only a Wallace poster in his car; a McGovern handbill, and TWO books about Sirhan, including Kaiser's. I have maintained all along that each assassination becomes more sophisticated than the last, and Mr. Bremer kindly has reinforced this theory.

While I'm running on this way I would just like to say that we're still impressed with the lack of an autopsy for Mr. Hoover in a situation where no firm cause of death can be stated, and how this whole business not only helps to correct the political balance in the list of those departing from our political life but also solves a rather knotty problem of what was to be done with the old man anyway. In case of national emergency, for instance, one would want someone on the job who would do what they were told.

Just one more thought on Mr. Bremer. While I'm speculating I might as well say that regardless of whether he's just one more lone nut or just a well-programmed nut, what he has done sets the stage for any bigger job that may become necessary later on, say after the Democratic National Convention is over and the final target becomes known. Certainly if there's a deadlock and a draft and Ted is nominated he certainly could merit attention, and I'm not sure that McGovern wouldn't be equally eligible. And as far as that goes, if by some miracle Nixon should do what should have been done all along and say the hell with it, we're getting out, there is no reason why the people who have been doing all these things should not turn on him. Of course he's their boy, and it would cause some heartburn here and there, but after all there is such a thing as keeping one's eye on the ball and attending to the real business that matters.

Later: Your mailing of May 17 just came in. Glad to have all the interesting enclosures, and herewith those you asked to have returned.

We gather you think Bremer is genuinely a nut. We certainly have that impression too. So was Sirhan, whom we very early concluded had to have been programmed to have behaved as he did. It remains to be shown how this could have been done with either man, but in Sirhan's case the case for programming grows stronger as time passes. He had no adequate natural motive, and the fact that he is Jordanian is, if anything, far better motivation than anything that has been suggested up to this point about Bremer. One witness describes him as very blond -- "almost an albino" -- which suggests a person more lonely than fundamentally crazy, more seeking some shred of self-realization and identity than deranged. In such case he could be peculiarly vulnerable to suggestion by anyone who paid him any serious attention. No hint that anyone has, of course.

In reply to one of your notes, I'm sorry to say I don't know any likely newsmen in Houston. The AP man there is very much an establishment type who specializes in reporting news of the oil industry. A nice guy, but no telling how he'd react to an inquiry about Foreman. More likely, I should think, might be one of the kids who work for Pacifica's station in Houston, KPFT-FM, but there again I'm a bit hesitant to suggest an approach because I don't know any of them personally. Larry Lee, the young man who started the station, steered it through two KKK bombings and got it on the air in spite of everything, is now in Berkeley at KPFA, and there is some suspicion that he's not quite what he seems and may be working for someone else. If true, it's extremely nasty business. We just don't know. Possibly Kuttner or one of your friends on the Post might have some suggestions.

Glad to hear your trip was productive and that you are so pleased with the results. Got to get this in the mail. Best from us both.

Jim

jdw